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## ODDS AND ENDS.

IMITATIONS of grained leather used in fancy articles and decorations are made through the medium of photography in these enterprising days, and brass and bronze plaques are made of plaster and papier maché, painted and dusted over with bronze powder. Bogus bronzes and plaques have been seen by almost everybody, but bogus leather is a new wrinkle, at least it has not been manufactured since army contractors made shoes with brown paper soles. A real skin, alligator, seal, or boa-constrictor is photographed and printed on sensitized gelatine. The parts not acted on by light are taken out by dissolving in water, and a cast being then made in metal, the cheap leather and the plate are pressed together, the plate leaving its impress on the leather after passing under heavy rollers. Dyes and stains complete the resemblance of this artificial product to the original. It is wrong to play these tricks on innocent purchasers, but the principle may prove useful in the manufacture of serviceable imitations which shall be openly sold as such. There is embossed and figured leather such as comes from France and Japan, which is wholly beyond the power of common people to purchase. Why not have an imitation of it, that we may secure the effect if not the substance?

SURELY of all places a picture gallery is a place that one would naturally expect to see decorated and beautified. A depository of the arts should, one would surmise, be worthy

of the distinction; yet how few are so! Our picture dealers' galleries are as bare as butchers' stalls, and commonly private galleries, while they are carpeted and presume to a little more elegance in framing than the public gallery, are strikingly out of consonance with the pictures. It is true that extravagant decoration and a multitude of knick-knacks, tables and cabinets, with bright mural paintings would be out of place because they would distract attention from the works of art; yet an inlaid table or two, a few carved chairs, a central divan, a portiere at the door, and a railed shelf above it supporting a few vases or bronzes are not obtrusive, and they suffice to maintain an air of richness and elegance, and to preserve the artistic unities. No room in a house ought to be merely a show-room, a place where a visitor would feel uneasy, and where one would not or could not sit and converse at ease. Right glad am I to see the initiative in this matter taken by directors of public exhibitions, for owners of private galleries will readily follow their example. The committee of the Bartholdi loan exhibition in Brooklyn created much comment of a favorable kind by their departure from custom in that exhibition. It was a noble collection of paintings, and they housed it fittingly. The usually bare gallery of the Art Association was hung with maroon cloth, which formed a backing for the pictures, and visitors trod on a heavy, rich, crimson plush carpet. Portieres hung across the entrance to the smaller gallery, and in the centre of the floor was a large divan shadowed over with growing palms. The feeling on entering the apartment was one of agreeable surprise—some such a feeling as a first view of Wm. H. Vanderbilt's galleries awakens, for there also, though subdued to the pictures, the floor and roof and walls have a magnificence of their own. The pictures enhance the beauty of the apartment, and the apartment supports the pictures. Perhaps the most noticeable of public gallery decorations are those to be seen at the Water Color Exhibition at the National Academy of Design. They are entirely the product of the taste, skill, and experience of Mr. A. A. Anderson, whose decorative paintings were recently mentioned in this magazine. The walls, to a point above the "sky line" (so dreaded by unsuccessful painters) are covered with maroon cloth and a Japanese gold-webbed fabric, the latter appended as a sort of frieze. The upper stairs of the broad, central flight, are covered with thick red carpeting, and from the rail about the corridor hang many Persian and Turkish rugs of varied pattern and subdued rich color. Above the entrances to

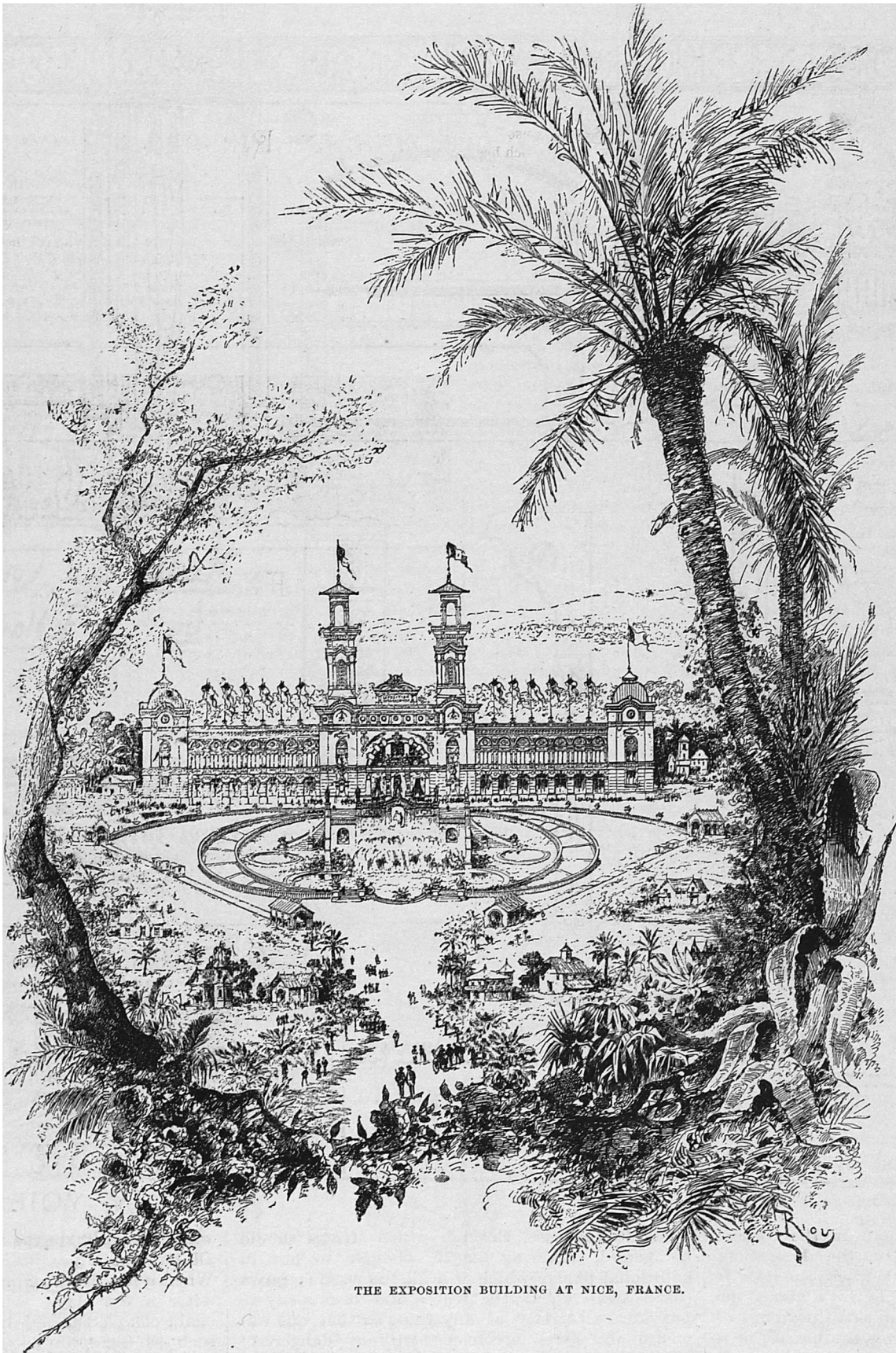
various rooms are tapestries, oriental textiles, plaques, bronzes, porcelains, and bric-a-brac tastefully arranged. Birds sing in carved wood cages, a palm tree spreads above the divan in the large hall, and pots of lily-of-the-valley make fragrant the air. From an old bronze censor on the stairs arise the fumes of burning "joss sticks." In the corridor and large hall huge awnings, extemporized from gorgeous Japanese fabrics, are suspended from the ceiling where they assist in converging the light upon the pictures, and keeping the spectator in shadow. Two or three huge Japanese umbrellas, fully opened, hang from the ceiling, and the light striking through their florid decorations, renders them as brilliant as stained glass. Having established this precedent of decorating the galleries, it is to be hoped that the Water Color Society will continue the graceful custom. The hanging committee has this year joined Mr. Anderson in the endeavor to impart a bright and original appearance to the exhibition by grouping the pictures in a manner to add materially to the decorative effect. The flower-pieces, for instance, are hung together, and the dark pictures with gold mats are opposite the light pictures with gray and white mats. In decorative affairs the American artists—especially the younger ones—exhibit a very promising degree of interest, ambition, and attainment.

THE author of a work on home beautifying is severe against the use of plates and porcelains as wall decoration, and declares that the effect is that of hanging table ware around the room, which it would be better to conceal in the china closet. While I certainly would not hang stew pans and

experimentalists will, perhaps, make it—it would be an "art preservative of all the arts," for its glaze protects the colors and it can be made to assume any form that the designer chooses. Even as I write I see that in Mangua, Nicaragua, imprints of human feet have been found in the now petrified clay, five yards below the surface, and that excavations in the neighborhood have revealed tripodal vessels of decorated earthenware painted in black, red, and silver, the drawings closely resembling the work of Etruscan artists, and one of them showing an individual wrapped in a dressing gown exactly like the modern article. The footsteps are believed by a geologist to have left their imprint on the ground 50,000 years ago; and if the pottery can be associated with the people whose footprints have just been uncovered, we have a link that may unite the present with the past and furnish a clue to important chapters in the unwritten history of America. Pottery and porcelain, therefore, have their artistic and historical value, and are entitled to be recognized as factors in household decoration. They are often more brilliant than pictures, they combine beauty of color with beauty of form, they offer a sparkle and diversity of color and decorative effect that we cannot always look for in pictures, and they are often so exquisitely painted that none but the best pictures can hold their own against them.

THE NICE EXHIBITION.—The exhibition now open at Nice has attracted such widespread interest, and the buildings with their surroundings are so picturesque and attractive, that we have thought well to reproduce from a current French paper an illustration of the "palace" and grounds, and at the same time quote the following remarks concerning it from that paper's correspondent:

"Building and grounds are really gems in their way. The former is not only an architectural triumph, built, as it is, on the slopes of a steep hill. The staircase and cascade that rise up almost perpendicularly from the lower gardens, produce an imposing effect, and it is almost superfluous to say that the view from the wide terrace which crowns them, extending along the whole façade of the exhibition building, is magnificent. The panorama of the town, with its girdle of orange and olive groves, the triple chain of Alps—some of their distant summits white with snow—which encircles it on three sides, and the blue sea on the fourth, is incomparably beautiful. This view alone repays a visit. All the ordinary and now familiar features of international exhibitions are, however, there in miniature indeed, but they are the more enjoyable for that very reason, and one can spend a couple of pleasant hours in examining the contents of the "palace" and those of the many pavilions that cluster round it like satellites. In these latter are to be installed the industrial and natural products of the various towns along the Riviera—Cannes, Mentone, St. Raphael, etc. But, like all the other departments of the exhibition, these pavilions are behind-hand, and a fortnight must elapse before they are completed. That of Monaco alone was ready to open its doors to visitors, and the show of majolica and barbotine ware which it contains is marvelously beautiful and artistic. The industry, only founded in the little principality some dozen years since, has made astonishing progress since its products attracted so much attention at the Paris Exhibition five and a half years ago, and has now, to all appearance, reached its zenith, for it is hard to conceive of any nearer approach to perfection in work of the kind. These wares, so rich in color and so delicate in execution, have only to be known to be run after, more particularly as



THE EXPOSITION BUILDING AT NICE, FRANCE.

castors and pie plates beside my pictures, I have seen the use of plaques amply justified in some apartments where they lent more life and color to the walls, and were really more interesting and more decorative and more artistic than the pictures. Plates are round, while pictures are angular, but I see in this nothing that essentially unfits porcelain and terra-cotta from being shown in the same room with canvas. The oil colors of paintings are fleeting, the colors of porcelains are permanent, and in that respect the porcelains are the better. Were fictile ware more durable—as future inventors and

their price is relatively moderate. At the rear of this little pavilion is a lofty glass-house, covering a grove of splendid exotic plants typical of Monte Carlo. When the contents of the main building and of the annexes are completed it will be time enough to allude to them, but the Fine Arts section is already in such an advanced state that its merits can be judged. The younger French school is remarkably well represented. The only other country that shows well in front is active little Belgium, and Flemish art once more makes a notable display with canvases by Knyff."